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Contest for Space: Struggles in Zimbabwe's Bottom-Up Industrialisation: Insights from the Informal Entrepreneurs at Makoni Shopping Centre, Chitungwiza

A Dissertation

By

Owen Tonderayi Nyamwanza

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TO GOD BE THE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER AMEN

DEDICATION

To my mother for being the inspiration I have always needed.

To the memory of my late father Cecil T Nyamwanza and uncle Stuart I. Nyamwanza-the world feels very different without you

“A city is composed of different men; similar people cannot bring a city into existence”

Aristotle

ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe's quest for bottom-up industrialisation through the informal economy seems to have been stalled by a plethora of planned and unplanned factors. Foremost has been the contest for space precipitated by a lopsided distribution system coupled with insensitive policy and legislative instruments dating back to the colonial era. With the country erupting into a War Veterans-led revolution that climaxed in the year 2000, it was assumed that those previously prejudiced from accessing land especially the urban poor who form the core of the informal economy would benefit. This was not to be as the state continued to brutally suppress the informal economy and tactically supporting middle class and elite interests on patrimonial grounds in allocating available land. This has culminated in an acute contest for space pitting various sectors of the informal economy against the state, local authorities and formal business who claim a stake in the urban space discourses. This study is an analysis of how the contest for space, spurred by the revolution and counter-revolutionary state action in Operation Murambatsvina, has influenced bottom-up industrialisation in urban Zimbabwe. Central to this analysis are the concepts of space, scarcity contest and conflict as well as informal economy. It attempts to explain how scarcity of space necessitates contest and conflict and how the informal economy fares in the face of this scarcity contest and conflict. There is an urgent need for revision of space-allocating systems to avert the down ward spiral of the informal economy.

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ESAP:	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FTLRP:	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
G o Z:	Government of Zimbabwe
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
MDC:	Movement for Democratic Change
MERP:	Millennium Economic Recovery Programme
SEDCO:	Small Enterprises Development Corporation
SME:	Small to Medium Enterprises
STERP:	Short Term Economic Recovery Programme
ZANU PF:	Zimbabwe African National Unity Patriotic Front
ZESA:	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZHIMA:	Zimbabwe Home Industries and Marketers Association
ZRP:	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZDHS:	Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey
ZIMPREST:	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation

INTRODUCTION

At independence in 1980 the post-colonial state inherited a segmented economy along rural and urban as well as formal informal lines. The informal economy was forbidden and effectively suppressed in urban areas during the colonial era and even after independence, the post colonial state was reluctant to support and develop it. The economic fortunes of independent Zimbabwe took a tumble beginning in the drought stricken second anniversary of independence (1982- 83 drought) and have been going through a free fall ever since. The situation did not abate even with IMF and World Bank-engineered ESAP which accelerated the deindustrialisation of the economy (Tibaijuka, 2005). However Zimbabwe's economy registered some positive growth with the introduction of the multi-currency system which replaced the moribund Zimbabwe dollar in year 2009 (New Africa Securities, 2009).

Following ESAP, and the concomitant formal economy shrinkage many people joined the informal economy as a result of limited availability of formal employment and high urbanisation rates. It was against this backdrop that the informal economy started to gain credence as the panacea to the country's fast waning economic fortunes and sluggish formal sector employment growth. The informal economy now surpasses the formal in terms of job creation and actual production (Chimhowu, Manjengwa and Feresu 2010: 11). The informal sector is argued to directly employ an estimated 3 to 4 million people while the formal sector accounts for about 1,3 million people (Tibaijuka, 2005; Coltart; 2008). However, the robustness and tenacity of the informal economy should not be taken as given considering that local government structures, the central government systems, the elite middle class and formal business all shun the informal sector and continuously persecute and ostracise it even in times when it has prospered where the formal economy faltered with a negative rate of minus 10 percent in 2003 (Dekker, 2009).

Ever since the attainment of independence the issue of redistribution of land has remained topical with calls for colonial wrongs to be corrected intensifying by the day. The state-sanctioned redistribution that took place in the first two decades of independence had very limited impact on the skewed land ownership structure with a disproportionate 6 034 Europeans (Njaya and Mazuru, 2010)

continuing to own half the country's arable land while the majority of the indigenous population were squeezed on small albeit marginal areas (Moyo, 2005; Sadomba and Andrew, 2006). The situation was equally untenable in urban settings where the urban poor were deprived of this all-important resource, with particularly high density suburbs stretching beyond their holding capacities as many families crowded in residential stands designed for single families. Infrastructure often times yielded and ruptured (Action Aid, 2005).

Having realised the reluctant and slow pace of land redistribution by the state, the landless rural and urban populace were engulfed by a spirit of self-provisioning. Led by veterans of the 1970s liberation struggle, the masses started to occupy White owned farms and state land in both rural and urban areas in 1998 (Sadomba 2008). Initially the state was opposed to this wave of self-provisioning and it set the police and other state agencies on the land-hungry farm occupiers chasing them off, but the movement had gained so much momentum that the state succumbed to the pressure and officially embraced this movement through commissioning of the 'deceptive' Fast Track Land Reform Programme in year 2000 (Sadomba and Andrew, 2006).

The land revolution that had been set in motion by land-hungry veterans, peasants, youths and the urban poor soon assumed a technocratic character after being usurped by politicians and the elite middle class with the initial front runners of the movement being sidelined. Moreover the movement was misconstrued by these 'new comers' as rural and communal and not necessarily urban in its orientation despite the fact that the urban just like the rural populace were in need of land. After the land movement had been 'hijacked', the spirit of self provisioning did not subside among the poor. The veterans continued to mobilise the masses to challenge the abuse of authority by those in positions of influence and to call for the fair redistribution of the land especially in urban areas through establishment of housing co-operatives, informal sector locations in open urban spaces and state land. Peri-urban farms were occupied for residential accommodation and informal industrial development as well (Masuko, 2008; Sadomba, 2011).

The land revolution in Zimbabwe led to polarised views of the situation domestically; regionally and globally .While some viewed it as a violation of human rights; others saw it as a long overdue exercise. The European Union, United States, and several Commonwealth countries

immediately placed economic embargoes on the country for embarking on the so-called chaotic land redistribution exercise (Tibaijuka, 2005). This isolation and the inevitable downturn in agricultural production (characteristic of such a nationwide land revolution) led to economic decline and hyper inflation which forced more people to join the informal economy (Coltart, 2008). However, the resilience of the informal economy in the face of international hostility to the country should not be taken at face value considering that local government structures, the central government systems, the elite middle class and formal business all shun the informal sector and continuously persecute and ostracise it (Becker, 2004)

In 2005 in what was viewed as a reprieve against erstwhile and confrontational urban populations, the state initiated a 'scotched-earth' clean-up exercise code-named Operation Murambatsvina. The state agencies went about razing down residential and business structures set up as a form of self provisioning of accommodation and businesses by the urban poor but deemed illegal by the state and the local authorities (Tibaijuka, 2005; Sachikonye, 2006). Chitungwiza, the third largest urban area in Zimbabwe, was severely affected by this blitz. Prior to the onslaught, Chitungwiza overall and Makoni Shopping Centre in particular was a thriving hub of informal economic activities and Operation Murambatsvina led to an almost complete erasure of the informal economy which had to 'rise from the ashes' about five years later, in 2010.

Whereas the revolutionaries changed the economic landscape in Zimbabwe, Operation Murambatsvina, a violent tactic of the broad FTLRP strategy brought to the fore a particularly contentious economic, social and political milieu. This was because the War Veterans-led revolution sought to make land available to the rural and urban land hungry which Operation Murambatsvina reversed by violently attacking and chasing people off the land they had acquired through FTLRP or otherwise and destroying the informal industries they had built (Bratton and Masunungure, 2006).

The contest for space obtaining in the informal economy in the aftermath of the socio economic and political transfigurations wrought on the country by the FTLRP and the state-orchestrated Operation Murambatsvina therefore elicit further analysis which is the subject matter of this

research. Though mostly drawing from events from the year 2000 to 2010, the research will make reference to the first two decades of Zimbabwe's independence as well as the colonial era to try and outline the historical antecedents of this contest for space and how it has influenced informal economy performance in contemporary times.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The current conceptions of urban land use control are largely based on the legal and institutional forms imported during the colonial period, including survey, registry and use definitions (Jenkins 2006). As such, it is arguable that the current problems facing contemporary African urbanites in general and the informal economy in particular can be traced back to the colonial era. Rakodi (1995) states that for Southern Rhodesia, it is the social, economic, political and religious institutions that were put in place by the imperial masters which resulted in the suppression of the indigenous populations. Infrastructure was barely available and where it was available it aimed at exploiting and controlling natural and human resources for the benefit of the imperial master rather than developing the colony. A network of pernicious and punitive regulations that controlled the residence, labour and mobility of the indigenous populations was put in place. A variety of legislations were used to control the African population in the then Southern Rhodesia.

Legislation like the Land Apportionment Act(1930) which sought to bar natives from owning any urban land, the Town Planning Act (1933), and Urban Councils Act(1973) were modelled after the British town planning statutes which were segregatory and exclusionary to natives' access to urban land (Feremenga 2005, Rakodi 1995, Auret 1995) The Industrial Conciliation Act (1934) for instance, excluded Africans from the definition of worker which effectively meant they could not establish enterprises of their own or operate the way foreign capital did (Mlambo 2009:97) In an almost similar fashion, the Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act (1946) forbade natives from staying and working in urban areas without the requisite documentation. (Barnes 2001: 105)

With the attainment of political independence in 1980 and removal of pass laws a huge influx of urban-bound migrants was noticed .Such an influx was however not met by similar scaling down of colonial restrictions on access to and use of urban spaces. Feremenga (2005) decries

independent Zimbabwe's uncritical borrowing of legislation and policies from the former colonial master, Britain, which resulted in the continuation of a reformed system that was supposedly responsive to the new needs of the post-colonial nation. Legislation like the Regional Town and Country Planning Act (*Cap 29:12, 1996*) Urban Councils Act (*Cap 29:15*) and the Provincial Councils and Administration Act (*1985*) can be said to be mirror images of the preceding colonial legislations which sought to effectively put a lid on low income urbanites' access to land. In other words, Zimbabwe can be said to have inherited an economy built on suppressing and isolating the informal economy from the formal (Muropa 2007).

Pursuant to the abortive Economic Structural Adjustment Programme that was implemented in the early years of the second decade of Zimbabwe's political independence the informal economy became the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy and the largest employer outside the government. The informal economy has remained, presumably, resilient despite abhorrent treatment at the hands of central government and other players. For instance in 2004 when national employment was estimated to be at about 70%, the informal economy was providing about 40% of the country's employment yet it went on to be purged by state agencies in 2005 under O M (Mlambo 2005). It has remained a vital but unacknowledged cog of the Zimbabwe economy even in times of economic austerity and political uncertainty. In the words of Bratton and Masunungure, "Over the previous decade (1990s) in Zimbabwe the informal sector expanded greatly first as a planned response to structural adjustment reforms and later as a spontaneous substitute for a shrinking formal economy" (2006:38) Regrettably this all-important sector has been marginalised in the discourses of development and the land question in particular.

The Legislative Framework

The land- (*read space-*) related legislative and policy frameworks in Africa generally and Zimbabwe particularly, despite undergoing post-colonial revisions of sorts, are still arguably, as crude to the poor ordinary citizens as they were in the colonial era (Jenkins 2006). Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa Team (2003) contend that these laws are outdated and often exclude substantial portions of the population from gaining access to resources. This is because they still vest much authority in central and local government authorities while effectively

stripping the ordinary day to day user of the land of any meaningful power to determine how it should be portioned out and utilised.

Part 4 of the Regional Town and Country Planning Act (GoZ 1996) accords more authority to the Minister and the Local Planning Authority to determine the design; implementation and where necessary amendment of Master and Local Plans. Such an arrangement ultimately concentrates the power to determine urban planning matters to a select few in the process locking out other interested parties like the informal entrepreneurs. For instance, Section 14(2) (a) of the Act cedes power to the local planning authority to “.....formulate the policies of that authorityincluding measures for the regulation of the use and the construction and use of buildings...”, while Section 15(4) stipulates that “....the Minister may approve a draft master plan subject to such modifications or reservations if any as he deems fit, or reject such draft master plan...” This therefore implies that the ordinary citizens who include the informal entrepreneurs play an insignificant role and are essentially decision takers rather than makers in the planning process. Hence, considering that the concerns of the state and by extension those of the formal middle and elite classes over urban space are given greater consideration ahead of those of the downtrodden poor, it is undeniable that the existing legislation caters for the needs of the former than it does for those of the latter, hence the problem of scarcity of land for the informal economy persists even in to post colonial and post-Fast Track Land Reform times.

Urban Land and Informal Enterprise Policies

Considering that policy is directed largely by legislation or goes in tandem with legislation it is probable that the urban land policy frame work is inclined more to legislation of which the legislation has been shown to be ordinary citizen-unfriendly and highly selective. Suffice it to say the policy of access to land only serves a rhetorical purpose if at all it exists (SLSA 2003). On the other hand, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Policy (G o Z 2008) elaborately recognises the need to: “Develop a framework to facilitate graduation of the informal sector to formalisation.....Establish business premises on the basis of careful selection of sites..... as well as.... (In collaboration with local authorities to promote SME (informal sector) growth through infrastructure development, structuring business zones...and....giving priority for allocation of business premises” (2008:22, 24, 31). Such policy pronouncements rightly

acknowledge the importance of the informal economy in national economic growth but regrettably they seem not to have materialised ending up on library shelves like other policy documents. If the policy was supported and implanted, the scarcity of space for the informal entrepreneurial body may have been averted. To that end, it can be noted that in terms of access to space, it is one thing to have legislation and policies in place and equally another to have the policies and legislation implemented for the benefit of the ordinary citizen.

Simone and Abouhani (2005) contend that African local authorities are overwhelmed by the degree of technical frameworks to which they must adhere which then makes spaces of habitation and livelihood formation opaque and impenetrable leading to problems of scarcity or is it misappropriation of urban spaces from the informal sector. Simply put, there has not been considerable provision of land or space for these activities commensurate to the number of people involved in them (Adeyinka et al 2006). Zimbabwe in general and Chitungwiza in particular has not been spared such a disconcerting scenario. Brown (2002) notes that the political and economic context in Zimbabwe's cities has profoundly influenced urban space and the policies of segregation pursued by the settler community are imprinted on the urban fabric today thereby retarding urban informal sector expansion.

The shift from a socialist economy to a market-based economy epitomised by ESAP which was instigated by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in a bid to improve the economy instilled a cost-recovery ethos within the state and local authority alike. This then necessitated radical policy changes regarding access to space resulting in service charges and levies being placed on all commodities including working space and other related facilities (commodification of space) (Muropa 2007). This was however against a backdrop of informal sector expansion owing to widespread shrinkage of the formal sector and job layoffs which saw many joining the informal sector on a permanent basis. Safety nets that were put in place to cushion those affected by the ESAP did not cater for the solidifying informal sector and its new entrants who were left to their own means to survive in these tough times especially with respect to availability of appropriate and adequate space (Tekere 2001:7) Now, if factors of sluggish performance of the economy since the onset of independence, ESAP and the resultant job layoffs, Operation Murambatsvina, the revolutionary FTLRP and Zimbabwe's isolation from the

“family of nations” are added to the equation it can be accepted that the informal economy has and should take centre-stage in the economic revival of the nation.

The failure of official policy and regulations which affect urban space to recognise the needs of low income population groups coupled with a hostile and often unpredictable political atmosphere inhibit their ability to help themselves hence affecting the wellbeing of the informal economy. The informal economy is by all standards Zimbabwe’s miracle yet it faces serious policy misrecognition which will most likely threaten its existence (Sadomba 2008). “Urban governance” initiatives like the OM in 2005 and other municipal “clean up” policies which sought to elbow out the informal sector from the picture are examples of how urban space is conceptualised as an essential, but heavily contested, tool for the survival of the urban poor who rely on it for employment and general upkeep.

The Politics of Urban Land

Despite having been downplayed and suppressed by state functionaries and local authorities the demand for urban land just like in rural areas gathered momentum over the years finally spilling over in the year 2000. The 2000 occupations were in fact part of a larger continuum of an ongoing and clearly identifiable land occupation movement (Moyo 2005). Sadomba (2011: 202) aptly captures the mood when he notes that:

In 2000 when nationwide occupations exploded, the whole urban landscape was transformed. War Veterans –led occupation of surrounding White farms and state land mobilised people to occupy open and private land in both the urban areas and the immediate farming vicinity of the city.

So salient was the movement that the previously indifferent urbanites joined in the contests for urban land that ensued. The movement took on a class identity where marginalised War Veterans, unemployed urban youths and other urban poor teamed up to claim the land they had previously been denied by the elite middle class and political heavy weights. Sadomba (2011:202) further argues that:

Urban land occupations aimed at the location of sprouting small-scale informal industry were even more dynamic than rural occupations.

As such, it can be argued that the wave of War Veterans-led occupations led to a thorough transformation of urban land allocation and retention systems. The urban poor and especially the informal entrepreneurs became so assertive and vocal pertaining to their once precarious access to land. This has culminated in the emergence of a whole new dimension in the discourses of urban land which were previously dominated by the elite and middle classes.

Operation Murambatsvina the state-orchestrated blitz on the informal economy has variously been interpreted to mean different thing to different people, affected or not. Bratton and Masunungure (2006), Kamete (2006), Mlambo, Vambe (2005) all view the Operation as a political respite against the urban electorate for continuously supporting the “opposition” MDC while snubbing ZANU PF in local government and general elections. On the other hand it was viewed by state agents as an “... effort at urban renewal aimed at ending the filth and crime associated with the more unsavoury parts of the informal economy” (Bratton and Masunungure 2006: 24). Despite having been variably viewed the Operation transformed the arrangement of urban space in a significant way that has greatly influenced the contest for space obtaining in the informal sector currently.

This study therefore, sets out to analyse the contestation for space among informal economy actors as well as between the informal sector and the state through the local authority. It also sought to document how space has been allocated or denied to the informal sector and how it affects their operations and relations with the state and local authority.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The definition of the informal economy is a highly contested topic owing to the fact that different stakeholders have different explanations of what it means. Castells and Portes (1989:12) define informal economy as the income-generating activities that are not regulated by the state in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated. However there are two dimensions to the conceptualisation of the informal economy that are generally applied in defining the informal economy; that is the reach of official governance and the degree

of structuring. These two provide an initial entry to a framework for capturing the many definitions that abound in the literature (Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur and Ostrom 2006). In terms of reach of official governance informal economy refers to any economic activity outside the different levels and mechanisms of official governance resulting in them being unregistered and legally outside the tax net. In terms of the degree of structuring, the informal economy is identified with lacking structure resulting in it being alternatively termed the unorganised sector.

Heintz (2010) however argues that to follow either of the above conceptualisations in isolation results in an often lopsided and incomplete understanding of the concept. This is because it is not in all circumstances that the informal economy is outside the purview of official governance nor is it the norm that the informal economy lacks a defined structure. This research will explore the informal sector taking into cognisance both postulations and characteristics with a view of problematising these assertions. Informal sector organisation and its contribution to the fiscus will be explored in order to find ways of judging its effectiveness and contribution to national development.

A perusal of literature on the African city (Toriro, 2005; Tranberg Hansen, 2004; Skinner, 2010, Mitchell, 2003; Jenkins, 2006) reveals that the issue of informal economy access to space has never been fully explored resulting in a serious gap in information. Rather, focus has been on informal residential space where issues of self provisioning of housing space, squatter settlements and self-help housing have been extensively explored (Rakodi 1995). Masuko (2008) for instance, rightly discusses how the war veterans led in the formation of post FTLRP housing cooperatives. He however does not chronicle how this war veteran led revolution led to the availability or not of space for the informal economy. My research on the other hand argues that more to the self provisioning of residential space the war veterans led revolution played a central role in self provisioning of space for informal economic activities resulting in agglomeration of different industries before and after Operation Murambatsvina. It also argues that the urban land revolution is not a once-off event but is ongoing with urban poor demand for land intensifying years after the operation as evidenced by contests over space at Makoni the main study area of this thesis.

Kirshner (2009:1) argues that the informal economy and urban space are two related areas ‘that have remained separate in literature’ yet they need to be analysed in unison. Closer analysis of the informal economy in Chitungwiza reveals that indeed the sector is viewed in isolation from the issue of urban land often resulting in the informal entrepreneurs being denied access to prime space. My research therefore contributes towards bridging the theoretical gap between the informal sector and urban space by assessing how the two interplay especially in a context of scarcity and contest like what is obtaining at Makoni.

Over the past decade academics writing on the land question in Zimbabwe have been engaged in a polarised debate on the course of the land question. Scholars like Alexander (2003), Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003), Hill (2005) and Raftopoulos (2008) are disillusioned with how the land redistribution took place and argue that it was chaotic and executed in a patrimonial fashion. On the other hand scholars like Moyo (2005), Sadomba (2008; 2011) Masuko (2008), Scoones et al (2010) argue that the land question in Zimbabwe was driven by a land movement aiming at correcting the existing colonial imbalances. Sadomba (2008) further argues that the spontaneity with which the movement took off led to it being viewed as anarchic yet it was not. While acknowledging the arguments from either side of the divide, I strike a middle path and argue that while not very salient on the surface the land movement in the urban settings has turned into a forceful revolution which is likely to spill over at any time. The level at which tensions and contests over space at Makoni and other urban areas are a clear pointer to the fact that the revolution is far from over but is just beginning.

Sadomba (2011: 202) contends that what started as a rural land movement became urban with focus shifting towards correcting the colonial economic imbalances as well. He argues that the War Veterans in support of the black business community mobilised the urban masses to venture in to the economy. My research goes a step further to analyse how the informal entrepreneurs fared especially in view of the influence of FTLRP and Operation Murambatsvina on issues like access to space in the informal economy .

The interface of the informal sector and urban space operates within a highly legalistic environment driven by the state and local government. Kamete (2006) writing at a time of

political and economic crisis, notes that in heavily centralised states like Zimbabwe local government structures have turned into extensions of the central state. The politics of local governance is no longer about local government and the local people but it is now more about the state, local government and the local people. Following this line of argument and in view of state orchestrated initiatives like Operation Murambatsvina and Garikai Hlalani Kuhle, this research analysed the state's intervention in urban local government land allocation and consequences on the urban poor who constitute the majority of informal entrepreneurs.

Toriro (2005) rightly points out that with regards to access to space in urban settings; the problem is not so much about availability of land but lies in the delivery systems in place which are lopsided and hostile to the aspirations of the urban poor. Could the problem really be about weak redistribution systems or something else? While this research agrees with Toriro's (ibid) propositions, instead of scratching the surface it unpacks the land delivery systems currently in place in Zimbabwe's urban settings and the legal and legislative instruments governing them to reveal how these systems form an impediment to informal economy access to space and growth. This research investigated where the problem with the current land delivery systems capturing local level politics as well as the voices and agency of informal entrepreneurs.

Various theories have been put forward to try and explain life for informal entrepreneurs after Operation Murambatsvina. Bratton and Masunungure (2006), Vambe (2008) and Mlambo (2008) all provide summary explanations of the occurrence of Operation Murambatsvina and its cancerous effects on the urban informal sector. They all point to the heightened contest for little available space among the displaced informal entrepreneurs but do not provide a detailed account of how Operation Murambatsvina impacted on informal sector growth nor do they trace the fortunes of the affected entrepreneurs half a decade down the line. This research however tracks down those informal entrepreneurs displaced by Operation Murambatsvina to establish how they have survived after that unforgettable experience.

Mitchell (2003) noted that space can be conceptualised as the product of two often competing ideologies. In view of the class politics behind state involvement in local government and the interest of international capital in the land revolution, the ideological contest is clearly manifest.

One ideologue treats space as a site of control and is the one usually favoured by authorities and administrators of urban areas; the other conceptualises space as the arena for the voiceless to make demands and as a medium for the contestation of power (ibid). The former conceptualisation of space rarely or does not explain space as conceptualised in developing countries nor does it define it in terms of its role in city economies and its social significance; but the latter attempts to (Kirshner 2009). This research argues that in the post FTLRP and post Murambatsvina period the definition of urban space has undergone a transformation with the authoritarian definition fast losing currency owing to the uncompromising stance of the urban poor who now confront the state and local authority over definition and use of urban space.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Urban spaces often involve constant change and adjustment in the form of confrontation, negotiation and collaboration between different parties. As such, the making and remaking, allocation and reallocation of urban spaces that follows needs to be investigated in order to capture the causes and effects of such rearrangements as well as to design contingent measures for future occurrences. Zimbabwe's decade-long (2000-2010) socio-economic and politico-cultural metamorphosis which was preceded by ESAP and especially the anti-settler and anti-imperialist campaign culminating in the FTLRP and the resultant rearrangement of both rural and urban spaces therefore needs to be researched especially in view of the changes it caused on the urban informal sector. Most studies, (Auret 1995, Masuko 2008, Moyo and Yeros 2005, Moyo et al 2008, Toriro 2005, Sadomba 2008), that have been conducted on issues of spatial reconfigurations have focused largely on rural agrarian and urban residential land resulting in a dearth of information on urban commercial land and land use systems. This research therefore seeks to analyse the impact of such transformations on issues of access to, competition for, possession and ownership of land to operate from (working space) with regards the informal sector. The informal economy is presumably the mainstay of Zimbabwe's faltering economy yet it fares badly in competing for space with the more robust formal sector and the politically well-connected middle class.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the research was to study the contestation for space among informal entrepreneurs, local authority, central government and formal business

The sub research objectives are outlined below:

1. Investigate the access to, methods and processes of accessing land by informal entrepreneurs
2. Investigate and outline the social and economic relationships among entrepreneurs and between them on one hand and between them and other players on the other and its impact on informal business
3. Analyse strategies employed to counter problems of scarcity of space in the informal sector

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question is:

How much space is available for informal entrepreneurs in Chitungwiza and how is this accessed in competition with other stakeholders?

The sub-research questions:

1. Who allocates space for the informal sector activities and how?
2. What strategies are deployed in accessing and retaining land in the informal sector?
3. How does contestation for space shape socio-economic and political relations in the informal sector?
4. What measures are employed to ameliorate the effects of scarcity and competition for space and with what measure of success?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher came up with a conceptual framework which was deemed to be simpler and flexible in explaining the contest for space in urban settings like Makoni. Concepts like space, spatial reconfiguration, scarcity, informal economy, contest and conflict form the core of this

conceptual framework. It is apparent that a myriad of definitions of space as the point of departure leads to a spatial reconfiguration which results in scarcity of the said space but this scarcity is felt most by those in the informal economy thereby necessitating contest over the available space culminating in latent and manifest conflicts over these available space in the process retarding bottom-up industrialisation Below are the working definitions of the said concepts

Space

Spatial reconfiguration

This refers to the rearrangement of space that comes along with a change in policy and economic circumstances in a given setting which often leads to scarcity of the said space.

Scarcity

Scarcity refers to a state or fact of being in short supply or a dearth of necessities. Scarcity often results in players competing for that commodity that may be scarce leading to contest and conflict

Informal economy

the informal economy is here conceptualised as those economic activities that in some cases lack government regulation, remit very little if anything tax wise and whose structure is ever changing basing on the prevailing circumstances.

Contest and conflict

Contest refers to a struggle for victory or a competition while conflict shall be taken to mean a collision, clash or struggle often emanating from incompatible viewpoints. In this instance the conflict arises from incompatible views over how space should be allocated and used in the informal sector.

THE RESEARCH AREA

The research was conducted at Makoni Shopping Centre which falls under the Seke North Administrative Area of Chitungwiza town. The fact that Chitungwiza was colonially planned along apartheid lines to serves as a dormitory for Greater Harare makes it a unique and interesting research area. The latter's space problems are, arguably being absorbed by the former hence intensifying the demand for space in Chitungwiza's townships. Chitungwiza is a fairly

young local authority in Zimbabwe and is located approximately 30km south of Greater Harare. It was formed in 1978 through the amalgamation of three African reserves: Seke, Zengeza and St Mary's to form a residential dormitory for the capital of Salisbury as Harare was called then. Chitungwiza received full municipal status in 1981 and it is now the third largest (after Harare and Bulawayo) and, fastest growing urban centre in the country. Chitungwiza has several suburbs and Seke is an aggregation of many sections. In Seke there is Makoni Shopping Centre which forms the commercial and administrative hub of Seke North Administrative Area of the Greater Chitungwiza town. It houses many formal as well as several thousands of informal entrepreneurs specialising in various trades, legal and paralegal. The shopping centre serves as an industrial and shopping complex for the more than 15 different housing estates in Seke (and other outlying areas like the Seke communal lands) which are named after the alphabet. There is Unit A to Unit P. According to the 2002 Population Census the town had a population of 321, 782. However its true population is closer to 1 million (ZHDS 2005).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Having realized that the topic at hand required a methodology that counterpoised the voices, experiences and practices of all the relevant social actors involved, the researcher settled for a largely qualitative research paradigm. The qualitative research methodology was preferred to the quantitative methodology because it captures the attitudes, feelings and values of the research participants from their own frames of reference or in their social setting (Burgess 1984, Leedy 1997). The qualitative approach is also helpful in that it seeks insights and is concerned with processes. The other advantage of using this research paradigm is that it is rooted in the voices and social experiences of the research participants; thereby allowing the researcher to capture the real sentiments of the participants with regards the allocation of space from which they can comfortably and conveniently conduct their business, as well as the contestations between them and their counterparts. This meant that the researcher had to spend more time in the field with the research subjects in order to observe and study the attitudes perceptions and reactions of the informal entrepreneurs towards the issue of contests for space as well as to observe space use systems in operation.

The researcher conducted some preliminary site visits at Makoni Shopping Centre to establish the informal sector activities that are taking place there. Makoni is home to the now defunct Makoni Home Industries site (popularly known as MuDurawall) which used to house an estimated 230 informal entrepreneurs. The displaced entrepreneurs are scattered around this site which allowed the researcher the chance to engage them in discussions regarding their access to space then and now. The entrepreneurs are starting to reoccupy their abandoned stands at the invitation of the local authority which brings out a whole new perspective on the contest for space at Makoni making it an ideal site to carry out research. The visits helped inform the researcher's sampling choices as they allowed him to familiarise with the "goings-on" on the ground prior to selecting the desired sample. Such visits also afforded the researcher an opportunity to establish a working relationship or rapport with the research participants. This cemented the participants' confidence and trust in the researcher and his motives. During the visits the researcher got down to mapping the sizes of the spaces being utilised by the various actors and also engaged in general chats with traders and their customers alike to try and glean their views on the issue of access and possession of land and if (and how) it affects them. In the following section the research methods used in the study are outlined.

RESEARCH METHODS

In gathering data, the research used unstructured interviews and unobtrusive on-site observation of informal economic activities.

Unstructured Interviews

The researcher conducted unstructured interviews with actors on either side of the divide, that is, the informal sector entrepreneurs on one hand and other players like the local authority and formal business along with other concerned institutions on the other. The unstructured interviews are suitable for the extraction of qualitative data because they allow feedback and give the researcher an opportunity to assess non-verbal communication in such sensitive areas as the state orchestrated Operation Murambatsvina. Unstructured interviews can be conducted as smooth flowing conversations thereby removing the subject apprehension factor (Burgess 1984). Mwanje (2001) also points that unstructured interviews allow the extraction of complex and highly sensitive subject matters. These interviews were conducted with the informal traders themselves since the research's thrust is to gain insights on the circumstances surrounding their

exclusion from the urban land processes and the eventual effects of such exclusion on their business operations. They also allowed the researcher to capture the non-verbal cues in the participants' remarks thereby providing a clearer picture of the situation.

The researcher also conducted wide-ranging discussions with a cross-section of the informal traders to try to establish how their businesses had been influenced by scarcity of space and what strategies they were taking to try and solve the problems. Focus was on those doing carpentry or furniture manufacturing and repairs, mini hardware and flea market trading, timber trading, household and commercial detergents production, metal fabrication, open air catering, shoe and other leather products manufacturing and shop-front vending or hawking at Makoni Shopping Centre. The researcher visited their current places of operation and engaged them in discussions regarding how they have operated and how they relate with authorities and other entrepreneurs alike given their often precarious access and possession of space to work from. These discussions were wide-ranging though with a thrust towards the issue of space at their places of operation. The researcher made several visits to these places of operation and spent time (ranging from 45 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes). The researcher also did a bit of retrospective community mapping at Makoni Home Industries compound to try and put into perspective how entrepreneurs were housed prior to Operation Murambatsvina.

To get an institutional perspective the researcher also conducted interviews with representatives of institutions that are directly involved in the allocation of land and its subsequent use by informal entrepreneurs. These institutional experts with their particular knowledge and understanding can provide insights on the nature of issues at hand (Leedy 1997). To that end, the researcher conducted the interviews with institutional informants in the form of local authority personnel responsible for urban planning and coordination of urban spaces. Interviews were arranged with City of Chitungwiza Seke North administrative personnel. Effort was also made to get the insights of representative associations of the informal entrepreneurs on the matter at hand. Interviews were conducted with representatives from the Makoni Home Industries Committee (MHIC) and the treasurer for the MHIC and a female committee member furnished the researcher with details of the committee's operations, membership statistics and the problems

facing the committee and the constituency they represent. The researcher used a digital recorder to record conversations with participants then transcribed the recordings later.

On-site Observation of Informal Activities

Unobtrusive or non-participant observation is where the researcher simply observes the activities but does not take part in them (Crabtree and Miller 1992). The researcher used unobtrusive observation of activities to determine whether allocated working space enhanced or hindered conduct of business and to determine the strategies employed to counter the problems of scarcity of space. The researcher made regular visits to the sites of operation of the traders and observed them conducting their business. The researcher was also interested in observing how other actors like Municipal Police, Z R P and other state agents interact with the informal sector players. This exercise was carried out over a period of four months, from July to the end of October 2010. The researcher observed a multiplicity of issues and activities that were influenced by space occupied by the informal entrepreneurs. These included size and state of space leased and or occupied by the entrepreneurs, police-instigated evacuations, relations among entrepreneurs, meetings and deliberations held thereat among other related issues. The researcher noted down the various observations he made in a note book the placed the observations under specific themes for presentation and discussion.

SAMPLING

The researcher employed a multi-stage sampling procedure which was deemed elaborate in that it allows for step by step identification and selection of supposedly information-rich locations and cases. The first stage involved purposive selection of the research site. The researcher purposively picked Makoni Shopping Centre as the ideal site to carry out the research due to the concentration of informal businesses there. The shopping centre also stands between the Seke communal lands and the sprawling Chitungwiza town and serves as a meeting point for the rural and urban entrepreneurs and shoppers. It is assumed that such a situation elicits and necessitates a unique land-use system given that it caters for urban and rural as well as formal and informal entrepreneurs alike. Makoni is an economic hub for the Seke North division of the greater Chitungwiza area and informal entrepreneurs from Units A to P and other outlying areas

converge there to conduct their business. Such a scenario makes the shopping centre an ideal site to conduct research on contestation for space hence its selection.

The second stage involved judgemental sampling of the research participants. Judgemental sampling is when participants who are known or judged to be good sources of information are specifically sought out and selected for the sample. It was chosen because it allowed the researcher to pick particularly illustrative cases, features or processes which illuminate the subject under discussion (Silverman 2006). To that end the researcher endeavoured to pick up those individuals deemed to be rich veins of information. These were the informal entrepreneurs, municipal authorities and representatives of informal trader organisations like Makoni Home Industries Committee and Makoni Stalls Market Committee. For the informal category the researcher picked those doing carpentry or furniture manufacturing, mini-hardware and flea market trading, timber sales, domestic and commercial detergents manufacture, steel and metal fabrication, open air catering, shoe and other leather products manufacturing and shop-front vending or hawking.

The researcher also employed the snowball technique or respondent driven sampling where he asked his initial respondents to introduce him to the informal entrepreneurs who could not be interviewed without prior introduction. This snow balling was especially handy for unlocking the gender dimension in the informal sector and the urban land question. For instance, it was helpful in facilitating the identification of female entrepreneurs who abandoned business after Operation Murambatsvina and could not be easily located as opposed to their male counterparts most of whom are still in business. One representative for each and every entrepreneurial category was picked and issues of location of enterprise on site, gender and age were also considered. This was done in order to root out biases that may have come about and to ensure re-representativeness. The sample also consisted of a town official and Makoni Home Industries Committee members.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher observed the ethics of research from gaining entry through to the research process and to the compilation of the findings. Prior to interviewing the respondents, the researcher pointed out to them that the research was mainly for academic purposes and informed consent

was sought first from all the participants before they participated. Participants were notified of their freedom to withdraw from the research at any stage without being queried about their decision to withdraw. Promises of the protection of privacy and confidentiality were made and fulfilled. This was made possible by the use of pseudonyms to conceal the names of the participants. The pseudonyms were coined in such a manner that the respondents' identities were made so discreet that even the respondents could not realise it was their case being discussed. As noted by Mwanje (2001), ethical considerations are fundamental to the research project since they have the capacity to either build or destroy future studies.

Limitations of the Study

The footloose nature of some of the informal entrepreneurs especially the vendors who did not have a permanent location made it difficult for the researcher to continuously and consistently follow and observe them and collect data or follow interviews up. However this was not a very strong drawback as the researcher managed to strike a good working chord with some of the vendors who were easily contactable. Owing to the highly bureaucratic nature of local authorities and central government alike, the researcher had trouble accessing vital documents like minutes of council meetings and attending some important meetings, even after production of official letters of introduction! This problem was however countered by using alternative but easily accessible sources of information like other sections of the bureaucracy who assisted with the required information. Unavailability of research equipment like cameras and recorders also hindered smooth capturing of information that was very vital. The researcher had to hire a digital recorder to capture some of the critical parts of the research. There is need therefore for this equipment to be made available in the department in order to enhance the quality of researches conducted by students. The research also fell victim to previous researchers who interviewed some of the informal entrepreneurs with promises of later sourcing financial assistance for them.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In this section I present the findings of the study. An objective-based criterion of presentation was employed whereby the findings and observations of the research were placed under related objectives of the research.

Determinants of access and use of space for the informal sector

From the research it was found out that there were a number of factors at play in determining informal sector access to space. As revealed by the **Town Official** a high ranking municipal administrator responsible for the administration of the part of Chitungwiza under which Makoni Shopping Centre falls ie Seke North Administrative area, there was a policy in place with respect to informal sector access to space which was guided by the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Policy. Enshrined in the local authority policy is the view that the local authority valued the informal entrepreneurs very much as they had helped in the expansion of small to medium ventures which form the backbone of Chitungwiza's industrial base. For the local authority, the informal entrepreneurs also constituted a prominent and attractive revenue base through payment of rates and levies giving it priority in accessing space.

He noted that when the Makoni Home Industries was set up it was aimed at employment creation and industrial growth. This was after the realisation that with little formal industrial growth, the informal sector could substitute as nucleus for industrial growth in Chitungwiza. Given the perennial financial problems characterising the local authority it just made available a piece of land (Makoni Home Industries) in 1995 which was not serviced and the entrepreneurs who took it up were expected to service and upgrade their stands. The criterion of accessing space at Makoni Home Industries was initially uniform with all respondents confirming that they acquired their stands from the Chitungwiza Town Council and received lease agreements. . For instance, Michovha an automobile repairer and school furniture manufacturer owned three stands one of which he was allocated and the other two he bought from colleagues who had no capital to develop them. However others like Judith who ran a general dealer shop and Mai Mushonga who was into domestic and commercial detergents production claimed to have bought their respective spaces from others who had failed to develop them. Because the stands were not surveyed and serviced the sizes of the spaces varied with some getting huge while some got small spaces. Michovha's stands measured about 300m²s each while Judith and Mai Mushonga reported having smaller spaces of 80m and 40m respectively.

However there appears to have been misconceptions among informal entrepreneurs as to what constitutes a lease as well as conditions for one to obtain lease for a given piece of land. The

Town Official noted that a lease as a form of tenure required cadastral mapping with accurate survey demarcations. This implied that despite having paid for their stands the informal entrepreneurs did not have tenure of the said stands by virtue of the stand not having been surveyed and serviced in line with requirements of granting of lease forms by the local authority. The entrepreneurs seemed ignorant about this fact and insisted that they had leases for the said stands.

In discussing with the TO one of the reasons for disruption and closure of the 203 informal enterprises at MHI in May 2005 was that the entrepreneurs went on to set up structures which were not in tandem with council by-laws that are guided by imperialist oriented legislations like the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act. Such an argument was viewed as a baseless and invalid justification for destruction of the Makoni Home Industries by the informal entrepreneurs. It seems the problem of misrecognition of the informal sector is still deep seated among policy makers and implementers alike.

Other informal entrepreneurs gave a slightly different account of how they acquired their spaces; the entrepreneurs at Makoni Stalls Market told a different story from the ones at Makoni Home Industries. The local authority's Market Stalls Register stated that the market houses a total of 1055 flea market and mini hardware stall holders who trade in second hand clothes, electrical spares, traditional and modern medicines, veterinary and agro chemicals, plumbing materials, automobile spares, paints, and lots of other tradeable paraphernalia. For one to access space here they apply to the local authority and are placed on the waiting list until someone decides to vacate the stall, which was said to be rare though. Each stand holder or trader has a table or stall measuring about 1metre by 1 metre. The stall size is largely dictated by the size of the storage lockers which measures a standard 1m by 1m. **Mabhaudhi** a 31 years old professional roof carpenter who operates a mini hardware at MSM claimed that the number of stands could be more than the official figure as the committee members created extra tables without the knowledge of the local authority. Others accessed the spaces through subletting from others who were out of business. Mabhaudhi claimed that he was 'renting' another stall from a colleague who is currently out of business to whom he pays a monthly rental of US\$80.

Other informal entrepreneurs simply occupied available open spaces and started to do business. This was seen to be the norm for vendors, shoe repairers, road-side carpenters and open-air caterers. For example **Masofa** who specialises in repairing and modifying old chairs, sofas and couches operates from a roadside open space and works with his young brother and two sons aged between 19 and 22 years. The business was started in 1990 and has been operating from there ever since. The open space from which they operate measures approximately 35m by 20m. A tree canopy protects them from the sun. Elsewhere, **Mukoma J** a 35 years old professional shoe manufacturer runs a shoe repair business on the shop front veranda of Cure Med Pharmacy located at the intersection of Jenje and Mangwende roads at the shopping centre. Mukoma J operates from an approximately 2m by 2m ‘rented’ area and has been operating from this place for the past four years.

Concerning vendors, the Town Official said the local authority had created ‘designated’ vending sites at Makoni, Units A, F, H, N, O and C Junction. He noted that the vendors shunned these designated sites in favour of shop fronts, street corners and bus termini. Council had however resolved to ‘formalise’ these undesignated vending sites as it had proved difficult to maintain the vendors at the formally designated sites. The process involved identifying ‘illegal sites that could be transformed and legitimised then compile a list of vendors in the area in order to map out the allocation criteria. The exercise took place in September and October 2010. (Communication with the Town Official)

The Town Official’s claims were refuted by **Musika** a 35 year old vegetable vendor who argued that he and other vendors once approached the local authority for vending sites and the site they were allocated was at the outskirts of town and one could go for a whole day without having their wares bought, hence it was not ideal for business. They abandoned the site and are back at the undesignated site which for them is conducive for business vowing not to leave because of the lucrative nature of the area He noted that:

“Mukoma pano pandiri panofaya! Handibve,” (My brother my current location is very profitable. I will not be moved from here).

Those doing open-air catering like **Machips** a 27 years old man who cooks of fresh potato chips, sadza, braai salads, rice, snacks and other delicacies which he sells to the general public and

patrons of nearby beer halls, opted for open spaces due to a number of reasons. For example, given the nature of his business he reckons his open air site is an ideal location which allows him to capture all the clients from the nearby bars. For him the site is also ideal as he does not have to pay rent to any one even the local authority.

The Town Official revealed that the local authority had received six farms earmarked for the expansion of Chitungwiza under the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. He projected an estimated fifty thousand residential stands will be realised from this venture. He was however not clear as to how much land would be set aside for industrial growth in general and informal enterprises in particular. The Town Official however lamented that space continued to be limited for informal entrepreneurs despite having the farm space at their disposal. He said:

“We however currently have limited space for the informal sector, it’s a pity”

Decimation of Space and its Effects

The onset of the notorious Operation Murambatsvina in mid 2005 was noted by all respondents to have drastically transformed the scene in terms of informal sector access and use of space. Besides having affected them residentially, the woes of Operation Murambatsvina also affected them economically through enterprise displacement. At the onset of OM, the informal entrepreneurs all noted that no prior consultation was done nor was information given to the Makoni Home Industries Committee (MHIC) on neither the impending destruction nor the reasons for the destruction. As narrated by one entrepreneur at MHI:

“Havana kumbotiudza chikonzero. Vakangotipa 15 minutes dzekukliya zvinhu zvedu.”(They did not give a reason for the so-called clean up. They only gave us 15 minutes to collect our wares and vacate the premise.)

Most entrepreneurs had all their stocks destroyed; Mai Mapuranga and Mai Mushonga argued that they went out of business because their stocks were destroyed along with their stands. On the other hand some claimed to have fallen victim to looters, Judith said while she tried to ferry her stocks to a safer place some by-standers helped themselves to her stocks hence she failed to recapitalise her venture after Operation Murambatsvina. Michovha lamented saying:

“Ndakarasikirwa nezvinhu zvakawanda pano kusanganisira mota dzemacustomers nematools angu” (I lost a lot of property including customers’ cars and my own equipment.)

He lost the structures which were destroyed along with welding machines, compressors, work benches, angle grinders and other smaller equipment.

“SeBending machine yangu yakangotswanywa ndakatarisa.Zvinopedza simba munun’una” (For instance my bending machine was crushed in front of me. It’s disheartening my brother.)

Even those operating from open spaces like Masofa and Mukoma J also felt the brunt of the cleanup as they went out of business. The situation was compounded by the fact that alternative space was not availed to those affected and where it was available it was inadequate or inappropriate for business. Masofa intimated that after his shade was pulled down by Municipal authorities at the height of the operation he was not offered an alternative site from which to operate

“Taingonzwa nezve Garikai but hatina kuwaniswa mafactory shells kana pekushandirawo”. (We only heard of operation Garikai(Hlalani Kuhle) but we did not have factory shells allocated to us.)

Mabhodha who ran a foundry business at MHI said:

“Hapana akatipa kwekunoshandira” (No authority allocated us an alternative working site)

Most of the entrepreneurs were left to look for their own alternative working spaces as the state could not help them. Some went back to the road side where they had started their ventures Others were offered stands to rent by a prominent ZANU PF politician who “owned” a large tract of land next to the home industries site. As reported by Michovha:

“Vamwe vakawaniswa mastands ekurenta panext apo paVaMabamba” (Other entrepreneurs got stands to rent at Mabamba’s plot next door.)

Simbi a 45 year old steel fabricator specialising in producing garden and kitchen table sets, sliding doors, window frames, room dividers, burglar bars among other metal and steel fabricated products said they were taken unawares by the OM destruction because the local authority had given them assurance that they were not going to be affected by the cleanup. He noted that after being dislocated by OM they moved to Chikwanha Shopping Center where they

rented an unfinished commercial stand and later moved to their current location at Mabamba's stand where they lease some working space. Mabhodha also relocated to an open commercial stand owned by Govo Investments at Makoni Shopping Centre but did not stay long as the rentals were exorbitant. He then relocated to KwaKabila Car Park which is located next to MHI compound. The car park cum industrial compound currently houses between 40 and 65 entrepreneurs. Mabhodha pays \$US80 per month for his shade measuring an approximate 28m).

Recently, the local authority approached the entrepreneurs and implored them to repossess their stands after realising their plight and their desperation for working space in the aftermath of OM. This was however, only on condition that they have the area surveyed and serviced and all building could be done with council approval. This according to the Town Official:

“Leads to orderliness and legality of the whole exercise.”

The local authority was also advising the entrepreneurs to first pay around \$US600 lease processing, surveying and pegging fee, draw a plan and build as well as construct a toilet per each stand. Failure to comply with the above requirements meant that the local authority would repossess the stands. The entrepreneurs however, felt that such demands were too ambitious and far fetched to be met by ordinary entrepreneurs One of them quipped:

“Tave kunzi titenge mastands atakambotenga zvekare.” (We are being cowed into buying our own stands)

In discussing with **Homwe** the MHI Committee treasurer he noted that the MHI was in ongoing negotiations with the local authority to allow the entrepreneurs to reoccupy their stands prior to paying the mandatory US\$600 for lease processing and surveying costs, *“Vanhu havana mari saka tiri kutaura nekanzuru kuti ibvumidze vanhu kufanoshanda vachitsvaga mari”* (People have no money, so as a committee we are negotiating with the local authority to allow the entrepreneurs to reoccupy while looking for lease processing fees.) He further noted that most of their members were in financial problems because of the exorbitant rentals they were paying as tenants. The rentals at KwaKabila Car Park and Mabamba where close to 200 entrepreneurs were housed after OM ranged from US\$80 to US\$150 excluding Council levies and electricity bills. The current stand sizes are much smaller than those they had at MHI compound. They measure

approximately 40m or 70 m. In extreme cases some entrepreneurs are allocated space approximately 9m.

The committee looked forward to a situation where they could get back to the pre-OM era where they worked from secure, accessible, convenient and spacious places. Informal entrepreneurs are of the opinion that democratisation of land should be extended to urban areas with open spaces and peri-urban land allocated freely to the sector as happened with rural FTLRP. This revolutionary argument was expressed by Homwe in an uncompromising mood as follows:

“Kanzuru yakafanira kutisiya tichingoshanda sezvakaitwa vakapiwa mapurazi pasina kana muripo. Inga nyika ndeyedu tese wani.” (Council should allow us to work just like the newly resettled farmers who did not pay a cent to obtain. We belong to the same country after all.)

At Makoni Stalls Market the entrepreneurs lamented the lack of security and adequate space especially for those with outlying stalls which were created to cater for those displaced by Operation Murambatsvina. Mabhaudhi noted that:

“Dambudziko guru isecurity, isu tiri kunze kuno ukacomplainer unongonzi ibva kana usisapadi.” (The problem is that of security for us with outlying stalls if we complain we are simply told to vacate the stall if we feel incompatible with the setting)

In my observation I saw that the area was overcrowded and unnavigable due to many traders who will be trying to fit their stalls on an already overcrowded location. The area also does not have running water and the pay-toilet is insufficient to cater for those wanting to use it. Informal entrepreneurs want the local authority to de-congest the area, building good stalls and providing proper sanitation rather than specialising in collecting levies only. (Interview with Mabhaudhi August 2010)

From observation it turned out that those that did not get working space from the local authority resorted to occupying areas earmarked for other activities like car parks. On one occasion the researcher observed Chitungwiza Town Council authorities driving off entrepreneurs at the open parking area which had been converted by vendors and automobile service men into a working

area. Though they did not ransack stalls as in Operation Murambatsvina, the authorities ordered the vendors to vacate the area and the vehicle repairers not to operate from the area since the area was zoned as a car park. On asking by-standers whether this act by the Chitungwiza Town Council authorities was correct or wrong they expressed mixed feelings with some arguing that it was unfair because the vendors and vehicle repairers had never been given an appropriate site from which they could operate. On the other hand some felt it was the right move because the area was a parking area and should thus not be converted to other uses in line with the official and legal view. Some felt it was a right move because the area was slowly returning to its pre-Operation Murambatsvina condition.

Relations between informal entrepreneurs and other urban space stakeholders

The contest for space at Makoni brought with it a myriad of relations within the informal entrepreneurship grouping as well as between them and other players like the local authority, central government, formal business among others. The said contestation brought into clearer relief informal sector-local authority which continuously change over time. The entrepreneurs felt that they were not getting due consideration from the local authority in as far as their demands for space were concerned.

Central to this tension was the issue of non communication of decisions by the local authority to the entrepreneurial body. They also complained that the local authority did not consult them on decisions affecting their access to space which made them suspicious of every action taken by the local authority. One entrepreneur who was asked if he would move if council were to avail better working space felt that as long as the local authority did not consult them he was not comfortable relocating because Council is difficult to understand and very unpredictable. His concern was whether they have the capacity to give informal entrepreneurs such space when initially they threw them off without giving them alternative work sites (Interview with Mukoma J September 2010). It also turned out that the entrepreneurs were not very confident with council resolutions and lacked a sense of security in council actions following what they went through during Operation Murambatsvina. Simbi noted that:

“Business rinoda confidence nesecurity uchiziva kuti mangwana hapana anondivhiringa. Zvinhu zvinogona kufamba kana pakwana interference shoma

kubva kukanzuru mapurisa nevamwe” (Business confidence and security are *sin qua non* to effective operation and production. We need to work without fear and minimal interference from the council and Police or anyone else for that matter).

Local authority-informal sector relations appeared to also have been made sour by alleged rigidity on the part of the former by the latter. Informal entrepreneurs complained that the council’s requirements were at times too rigid. Simbi who was rebuilding his stand noted that they still encountered difficulties. He noted that the process of rebuilding was slow and complicated owing to many local authority demands and specifications.

Relations between the local authority and the informal entrepreneurs were at times cordial as evidenced by the cooperation between the Chitungwiza Town Council and Makoni Home Industries. Homwe the Makoni Home Industries Committee treasurer noted that the new committee was still in its infancy but the most prominent stakeholder they were working with was the Chitungwiza Town Council: *“Tiri kushanda zvakanaka neKanzuru kunyanya Town Manager ari kutibatsira chose”* (We are working well with the local authority especially the Town Manager has been so helpful. He noted that the local authority was cash-strapped and could not assist financially in the refurbishment of Makoni Home Industries compound. The committee however approached the local authority and they agreed that the former would provide materials and the latter would avail the manpower for the said refurbishment. To date the committee and the local authority and the committee have combined forces in the refurbishment of the public toilets as well as surveying and pegging of stands,

“ Takatenga marata, roofing timber plumbing material nepaint, Kanzuru yakatipa vashandi kuti vaite basa” (We provided construction materials and the local authority chipped in with labour to refurbish the public toilets) (Interview with Homwe October 2010)

The entrepreneurs were starting to warm up again to the local authority as expressed by Simbi who noted that confidence was starting to build again among the displaced entrepreneurs but the situation resembles that of a wife who was once beaten by her husband, she is always afraid of the worst but eventually settles down. He meant that following the treatment and harassment

they got at the hands of authorities entrepreneurs had lost confidence to the extent of not being sure whether to repossess and develop their stands owing to fear of another reprisal.

The relations among the entrepreneurs themselves also ranged from being cordial to being hostile. The Makoni Home Industries compound for instance was a hot bed of conflicts emanating from a number of issues. Leadership of the Makoni Home Industries Committee for instance was always heavily contested. The committee comprises mainly of former stand holders who have knowledge of how the MHI compound used to be run. The committee meets the first weekend of every month to chart the way forward as well as to give updates and get the views of ordinary stand holders. They also liaise with the local authority and other stakeholders whose operations have a bearing on the Makoni Home Industries members' operations. On one occasion the researcher attended a meeting called for by the Makoni Home Industries Committee to discuss with members progress on repossession of stands. It turned out that the meeting was postponed but some of the committee members available were not aware of the postponement. Eleven people showed up and upon notification of the postponement people started complaining citing lack of transparency. Some suggested that they just repossess their stands without following protocol, while others felt the committee should be disbanded due to 'inefficiency'. In discussing with a stand holder next to me, he informed me that he was attending the meeting as a formality as there was confusion in the committee.

However Homwe and Mai Mushonga, another committee member, refuted the allegations by some MHI stand holders and old committee members that the new committee was involved in space allocation scandals, dispossessing legitimate stand holders of their properties, space grabbing, multiple ownership among other bad acts. They said such accusations were cheap talk only meant at destabilising the committee. This they suspected was being spearheaded by old committee members who were sacked for "bad leadership" and are bent on tarnishing the image of the new committee and the "good job" they were doing. He noted that some of the new committee members were actually victims not perpetrators of the said scams and they wanted to resolve the problems.

The researcher attended the second meeting attended by forty one (41) stand holders. Prior to the meeting people engaged in ‘general’ discussions about the state of affairs at the Makoni Home Industries compound. Issues of multiple ownership of stands and non payment of levies for the same were raised with some members querying why some individuals were in possession of more than three stands. This was a sensitive and potentially explosive issue that has divided the entrepreneurs with some following the new committee while others support the old one. At Makoni Stalls Market the relations were not as tense as was the case at Makoni Home Industries. Mabhaudhi said he had never witnessed conflicts over space at the market stalls but the Makoni Stalls Market committee resolves potential conflicts over possession of space but the standard sizes of the stalls was in itself an effective regulator of potential conflicts over space. The committee calls for occasional meetings when there is an issue warranting discussion. Such a difference may have emanated from the fact that at the latter huge sums of money had been paid to get the stands which heightened the sense of ownership.

The open air entrepreneurs who are easy target of law enforcement agents described their relations as bad as the ZRP and Municipal authorities chase them thereby ‘disturbing’ their business. However the disturbances varied depending on where one was working from. When Mukoma J was asked about disturbances by Municipal and ZRP officers he said

“Ini handisati ndambo vhiringwa navo. Ndinotongoona avo vemazai nemadomasi vachitiza Kanzuru neZRP” (Personally I have never had my operations disturbed by these officials. Instead I regularly see eggs and vegetable vendors running away from Municipal and ZRP details.)

Formal business and the informal entrepreneur relations were also bad because the former accuse the latter of invading shop fronts and obstructing customers Musika lamented that the formal businesses detested them. He said:

“Hativaki mashades nekuti vemashops vanoti itsvina” (We do not put up shades because the shop owners view it as dirt)

Relations among open air caterers were remarkable as evidenced by Machips who operates alongside other caterers and noted that they cooperate with each other and only competed for clients. For him there was abundant space which made competition for it worthless and very rare:

“Pano nzvimbo yokushandira yakawandisa tinongo mhanyidzirana macustomer chete’ (We have abundant space here and we compete for customers only)

The socio-economic and political influence of scarcity

The competition and resultant contest for spaces bring about varied outcomes on informal business operations. The respondents lamented that the dislocation caused by Operation Murambatsvina cost them a lot of revenue and clientele. Some like Michovha lost their clientele while others went out of business completely. Referring to the bush area he now uses as base Michovha noted that:

“Vanhu havafariri kuunza mota dzavo musango makadai ” (Customers are reluctant to bring their cars to insecure bush like conditions as here).

Operation Murambatsvina-induced scarcity of space was noted to have led to stunted growth of businesses given the fact that the entrepreneurs went out of business or cut back on operations in line with available space. Mukoma J noted that due to lack of space brought about by the cleanup he has had to stop shoe manufacture to focus on repairing only.

“Mushure meMurambatsvina takange tisisina pokushandira pakafaranuka zvakazoita nditange kuita marepairs chete Taisimbogadzira hundred pairs per week” (After Murambatsvina we did not have adequate working space resulting in us downsizing on manufacturing to focus on repairs only We used to produce a hundred pairs of shoes per week).

Elsewhere, Mabhodha reckoned that by constantly relocating he had lost lots of equipment and business time and wished they had not been removed from the home industries compound. He (due to uncertainty of tenure) mainstreamed his operations by shedding off ten employees, shelving the panel beating and furniture ventures and suspending other foundry activities to focus on production of cooking pots and coffin handles only.

The scarcity of space was also noted to have inflated the economic value of available space. According to the respondents space was expensive regardless of whether it was prime or not. As noted by Simbi, the stand he currently leases measures about 40metres(approximately half his

home industries stand) and they pay monthly rentals of around US\$150 which are comparatively higher and unaffordable for most entrepreneurs.

Marent akanyanya but takungoshanda zvenguva iyoyo, tongoita zviripo” (The rentals are too high but we have to contend with what is at hand.)(Interview Simbi October 2010)

Not only was the contest for space noted to affect informal business operations and growth, it was noted to result in increased unemployment. This is because downsizing or closure of operations came along with many job layoffs. Respondents reported having laid off their employees after having run out of spaces to operate from. Mai Mapuranga and Judith noted that at one time they had seven and five employees respectively but after they lost their working space they dismissed all of them due to closure of business. The story was similar with other entrepreneurs who also cut back on their labour force. Contests for space were said to have had a toll on the local authority as well. The Town Official said the Operation Murambatsvina-instigated cleanup was costly for both parties (informal entrepreneurs and local authority) considering that the former were taken out of business while the latter lost lots of potential revenue.

The political implications of the contests for space were also unravelled in the research. Respondents noted that the contest for space had taken on a political dimension. At Makoni Home Industries for instance the quest for leadership of the Committee turned out to follow political party lines. Michovha felt that the issue of ownership of stands was being politicised by corrupt and self-aggrandizing individuals. He pointed to a scenario where entrepreneurs are forced off a spacious location only to be offered a less spacious and expensive optional site to rent.

“Mabig fish ari kubenefita neurombo hwedu. Vanhu vanoti murombo munhu asi izvi zvinoratidza kuti murombo haasi munhu” (Political heavyweights are cashing in on our desperation. People say we should sympathise with the poor but in this situation the poor are being trampled on.)(Interview with Mabhodha July 2010)

He felt that the issue of zoning, planning and allocation of land in the informal sector should be done by competent and non-partisan professionals not politicians:

“Politician akaita semunhu akwira mubhazi achidzika panext bus stop. Vakatibvisa pano vanogona kunge vasisiri mumaoffice but problem yacho yatoita worse.”(Politicians are like passengers who board a bus and disembark at the next bus stop. Those who saw to our removal from here may no longer be in office but the problem (of scarcity of space) has worsened.)

It was also established that those who ‘owned’ huge tracts of space which were being sublet to the informal entrepreneurs had strong and well oiled political connexions which guaranteed continued ownership of these spaces. Space at Makoni has turned into a real political hotbed just as elsewhere in rural and urban Zimbabwe. Respondents indicated that some land barons with connections to some influential pre-independence political party over the years acquired land which was meant for future development. These entrepreneurs claimed to have been promised full ownership of spaces occupied in return for supporting some politicians. Though these claims were not substantiated by tangible evidence, one can note that concentration of vast tracts of space in a few hands galvanises their political clout while effectively denying the majority a right to own the said spaces which are essential for their livelihoods.

Even among vendors space was also accessed and secured through political connexions. Some space seekers have resorted to the tactic of political clientelism and patronage to obtain and secure spaces of operation. Such entrepreneurs openly support ZANU PF for “giving them land” and get no interference from municipal authorities or police details as they are ‘politically backed’. Musika the pavement vendor intimated that if one was a known political activist chances of them being harassed were slim. On being quizzed about those trading in electrical gadgets from an adjacent shade, Musika was elusive, dismissive and apprehensive about the issue. He only said:

“Haa avo ndeve zvevatongerwe enyika havabvunzwe bhururu” (Those ones are politically well connected and protected and no one dares ask them my friend.)

In expressing his displeasure with the manner in which Operation Garikai Hlalani Kuhle factory shells were distributed, Masofa remarked that:

“Mapoliticians matsotsi. Vaitipromisa mastands asi ivo vozvipa vega nehama dzavo” (These politicians are crooks .They promised us stands but they are now nepotistically awarding the stands.)

He regretted a situation where he likened himself to a landless slave which obtains both at home and foreign lands.

“Tinodawo nzvimbo dzekuti tizope vana vedu senhaka. Tikaenda Joni kana kupi tiri varanda nekuti hatina pekushandira nemunozve tiri varanda nekuti hatina pekushandira” (We want places where we can work and leave as heritage for our children. If we go to work in Johannesburg or anywhere outside we are like slaves because we do not have appropriate places to work from even here we are like slaves because we do not have anywhere decent to work from.)

Homwe wished for political intervention the FTLRP style when he retorted:

“Kanzuru yakafanira kutisiya tichingoshanda sezvakaitwa vakapiwa mapurazi pasina kana muripo. Inga nyika ndeyedu tese wani.” (Council should allow us to work just like the newly resettled farmers who did not pay a cent to obtain. We belong to the same country after all).

Scarcity of and contest for space also assumed a gender dimension in that female entrepreneurs struggled more than their male counterparts with respect to accessing space. It was mostly female entrepreneurs who reported having gone out of business due to scarcity of space. It was also observed that what is arguably the lowest level of the informal sector, vending, was dominated by women. Males were said to use females’ vulnerability to dispossess them of their working spaces. Mai Mapuranga noted that women’s access to working space proved to be problematic as they encountered lots of hindrances from fellow entrepreneurs, or in her case interference from in-laws and relatives on the husband’s side

“Zvakaoma nokuti isu samadzimai tinotorerwa mastands nevarume zvechisimba uye hama dzimwe dzinotanga kupindira-pindira.” (It is very difficult because as women we are dispossessed of our stands by men as well as some relatives who interfere)(Interview with Mapuranga October 2010)

Strategies engaged to counter problems of scarcity of and contests for space in the informal sector

To curb the problem scarcity and the resultant contests for space the informal entrepreneurs mooted initiatives which they deemed as contingencies against the said problems. The entrepreneurs who were displaced and do not have essential devices like electricity at their current work stations would subcontract the job they would have landed to others with the service. This was captured in Michovha's remark that:

“Pano hapana magetsi saka ndikawana basa ndinopawo vari kune magetsi toshandirapamwe” (There is no electricity here so I subcontract some of the jobs to my colleagues).

Owing to lack of adequate space in the urban areas some entrepreneurs resorted to temporary relocation of their ventures to rural areas where they felt space was abundant. More over due to uncertainty of tenure at their current work stations which may be undesignated and thus illegal some of entrepreneurs like Machips and Masofa argued that they maintained other similar ventures at their rural homes in case of any eventualities. After having been displaced by OM and with no space to work from Masofa temporarily relocated to his rural home in Nyanyadzi, Hot springs and started operating from there. Ever since, Masofa operates both ventures in town and at his rural home.

“Kuruzevha kuri nani nekuti nzvimbo haiperi and hakuna anokubvunza” (The rural area is better because the land is plenty and no authorities come after us).

Subletting was also a popular strategy of obtaining space employed by a large cross section of the informal entrepreneurs at Makoni Home Industries and Makoni Stalls Market. As long as one had the required amount of money they could sublet spaces but they could lose the space at any time. At Makoni Stalls Market it was established from Mabhaudhi that he leased another stall from a colleague who is currently out of business for which he paid a monthly leasing fee of US\$80.

Others resorted to the strategy of multiple ownership of space to cushion themselves from shortages that may occur in the future. This was said to be a very profitable strategy. For instance

some influential Makoni Stalls Market committee members had acquired more than three stalls and some had gone on to open bigger stores elsewhere from the proceeds of the stalls they own.

“Chairman wemuno ane matable jahwi uye akatovhura shop kuC Junction” (The chairman for this market has many stalls and the proceeds have helped him open a shop at C Junction)

At the Makoni Home Industries Committee meetings attended by the researcher it was observed that issues of multiple ownership of stands and non payment of levies for the same were raised certain members querying multiple possession of stands by some individuals.

The vendors evaded paying any levies to the local authority like was the case with flea market traders and others like the carpenters and mini-hardware owners. Musika said:

“Isu hatibhadhare asi kuti tinosungwa nemapurisa everyday. Vachangobva pano!” (We as vendors are not paying any levies for operating from here. Instead we are arrested by the ZRP on a daily basis. They were here a while ago).

He said when taken to the police station they pay a fine of US\$5 for selling from undesignated locations. The vendors are undeterred by the fines as they resurface every time a round up occurs. In justifying their resilience in the face of police attacks Musika noted that:

“Zviri nani kubhadhara \$5 than kuendeswa kwausingambotengerwi zuva rose” (I feel it’s better to pay US\$5 as fine than to be sent to designated vending points where sales are too low).

It was also noted that the vendors tactically manipulated the system by bribing and befriending the ZRP and Municipal police details. The officials at times pay a blind eye to vending activities which are deemed an eyesore by shop owners, Musika said:

“Mapurisa haachanetsi nekuti tinomboita mukando wemadhora dhora tovapa. Vakadya vanombotambira kure” (The police are no longer a menace to us, we simply contribute a \$US1 per vendor and bribe them. Once we bribe them they will keep away for some time)

On one occasion the researcher observed police details receiving ‘free’ portions of chips and braai packs from Machips which may imply that they were being bribed or silenced. This is very

possible given that the site from which they were operating does not conform to Chitungwiza Town Council health by-laws. The researcher also observed that female attendance and participation at the two Makoni Home Industries Meetings was limited. The few females who attended were mostly standing in for their husbands or other family members. Women were however observed to be dominant in market stall trade as stall keepers and pavement vendors.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Policy and Legal Framework of Informal Sector in Zimbabwe

The colonial legislation that was put in place by the settlers was designed in such a way that the Africans would work towards the development and prosperity of European capital. It is within the purview of these suppressive legislation and politico-economic policies that indigenous enterprises were few or nonexistent. To that end it can be argued that there was no legislation or policy in place to foster informal sector growth during the colonial era, on the contrary, there were instruments bent on effectively denying aspiring indigenous entrepreneurs the opportunity to set up businesses in town. As such the colonial legislations and policies which gave powers to European dominated local authorities to control and guide urban land zoning, use and development set the precedent for the post-colonial suppression of indigenous informal entrepreneurs through denying them space.

The attainment of independence in 1980 did not immediately translate into the repealing of the colonial policies and legislation which restricted indigenous industrial growth. Instead, the post-colonial legislation like the Urban Councils Act and the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act which were supposedly home grown still tied down informal economy access to urban land as well as putting in place impediments to the establishment of indigenous or informal enterprises. The solidification of the informal sector in Zimbabwe generally and Chitungwiza in particular can thus be noted to have been premised on the War veterans led revolution. As argued by Sadomba (2011: 202) there was serious mobilisation of both rural and urban people which led to the urban informal sector revolution. The uncompromising stance of urban informal entrepreneurs against the state and local authority policy pronouncements reveals that this

revolution is far from over and may eclipse and reconfigure the whole urban setting including formal business.

Policy-wise, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Policy (G o Z 2008) and the FTLRP, as planned interventions, are silent on urban informal sector access to space just as were colonial legislation and policies before them. For instance, analysis of the implementation of the FTLRP can be noted to have had a rural thrust with cosmetic attention being directed at the land-hungry urban poor. Much as the said policy and legislative interventions could be deemed informal sector-supportive by policy makers and implementers, they can be said to be of no significance for the informal entrepreneurs as they have not ensured the availability of space to them. Instead, these policies were eclipsed by the spirit of self provisioning that has seen informal entrepreneurs engaging in sporadic occupation of urban land. The inadequacy of FTLRP in solving problems of scarcity of space in the informal sector led the entrepreneurs to question the rationale behind coming up with FTLRP without a similar fast track industrial reform programme that could, supposedly, have helped improve the informal economy especially in terms of securing hitherto scarce working space. As such, the informal entrepreneurs rightly felt that urban space has to be democratised as happened with rural space. This is in line with popular consciousness of returning to the liberation agenda, a subject spearheaded by War Veterans and other organisations in the mobilisation period of the 1990s (Sadomba 2011).

Moyo and Yeros (2005:193) detail of how the FTLRP 'went urban' when about 10 000 families received peri-urban space to farm and form residential units. They viewed this as a well calculated move by the political elites to placate the erstwhile urban populations who were starting to agitate for redistribution of urban lands. Was the urban land revolution really stage-managed as some would like to view it? I however view it otherwise and argue that given the current politics over urban land, the unfolding land revolution has gone beyond the level of being stage-managed. Instead the urban land revolution is being spearheaded by the urban poor themselves. This is because the previously docile urban poor have become so assertive in challenging the politicians, local authorities and elite middle class over land available in urban settings as is evidenced by contests over land at Makoni.

The Political Economy of Informality and the Politicisation of Spaces

The economic tag that has been attached to urban space has regrettably made life difficult for the informal entrepreneurs. The local authority now views the scarce space made available to the informal entrepreneurs (Makoni Home Industries compound for instance) as a cash cow what with charges of close to \$600 being the asking price for those wishing to repossess their stands at Makoni Home Industries. At the end of the day it is the economic and politically powerful not the voiceless informal entrepreneurs, who get superior local authority priority coupled with preferential loans from banks thereby predisposing them to getting cheap access to urban land both formally and informally. Such an arrangement precludes the urban poor and informal entrepreneurs from accessing space at sustainable rates. However the class character of urban land is being seriously challenged by the informal entrepreneurs who occupy land or space that is reserved for elite formal businesses in defiance of local authority zoning and allocation of space.

Just like in other urban settings, the process of space ownership and retention by the informal entrepreneurs turned to be unbearably expensive at Makoni owing to the high procurement and retention costs imposed on these spaces. These inflated costs of procurement, retention and maintaining the spaces aid in the unfair treatment of informal entrepreneurs as they cannot afford the costs. As a result of this the informal entrepreneurs have fallen into a vicious cycle of poverty whereby payment of exorbitant rentals and local authority levies effectively denies them the opportunity to make savings.

The contest for space also brought out a class discourse of informality. The elite middle class who dominate formal business and occupation of prime space at Makoni apply a variety of tactics to elbow out the informal entrepreneur. Such treatment draws from a colonial legacy of suppression of indigenous non formal economic ventures by the state in collusion with the elites. In response the informal entrepreneurs have devised an anti-elite showdown by shunning the designated but less lucrative spaces and occupying the spaces reserved for elite occupation. Such defiance points to a festering anti-elite and anti-state offensive spearheaded by the informal entrepreneurs which may result in a permanent rearrangement of urban space at Makoni.

From another perspective, the space issue can be said to have been politicised through political patrimonialism. (Sadomba 2009: 7) argues that ZANU PF politicians “... use(d) the state...to hijack a popular land movement to widen its eroded political base.” It is evident here that in Zimbabwe just as in other countries globally urban spaces have been politicised. The political system is therefore amenable to abuse by opportunists who want to capitalise on its usefulness in the procurement of spaces. In greater Harare prominent politicians and business men have been fingered in shoddy land deals, while the same happened at Makoni where a prominent ZANU PF politician acquired vast tracts of land under unclear circumstances and went on to subdivide and lease out to informal entrepreneurs. This in itself constitutes a huge drawback for informal sector growth given that they are denied space which is then given to the influential politicians. As such, to deny that the question of space has been politicised would be to miss the point all together.

Also interesting is the fact that more to the informal sector and discourses of space assuming a class character they have are also gendered. Gender, the social construction of maleness or femaleness influences access to and retention of space in the informal economy that is operating in a patriarchal society. Women predominance in the less lucrative and survivalist sections of the informal economy is attributable to their limited financial base which denies them the opportunity to compete for space with their male counterparts. Just like in other sectors of the economy women informal entrepreneurs fare badly due such financial ineptitude combined with conservative societal expectations. ZHDR (2009) also argued that owing to the intense economic meltdown men joined the informal economy a previously female domain thereby squeezing them out. Gender plays a key role in determining one’s access to space at Makoni as well as in other rural and urban settings, hence, the question of urban space and the land question is gendered everywhere. Determination of access to urban space by gender helps expose the inadequacy of land policies in Zimbabwe which are not gender sensitive.

Operation Murambatsvina and the Class Suppression of the Informal Economy

Operation Murambatsvina severely dislodged the majority of informal entrepreneurs and it is justifiable to view it as having been targeted at wiping out the ever-expanding sector. The Operation undoubtedly disrupted the informal economy, displaced and undermined the livelihoods of large numbers of people.

Given the brute force applied in its execution, one may be prompted to conclude that the operation was a deliberate onslaught on a given class, the informal entrepreneur class. I would feel that the exercise was targeted at subverting and thwarting the class aspirations of the informal entrepreneurs owing to its ferocity and given that it destroyed and displaced them from their sources of livelihoods. The long term outcome of Operation Murambatsvina is that it severely decimated the space available to the informal entrepreneurs as well as reversing the gains of the War Veterans-led urban land revolution which had made available hitherto scarce space to the informal entrepreneurs and other urban poor thereby predisposing it to being interpreted as a state initiated anti-informal sector attack driven by the desire to systematically eliminate it.

Operation Murambatsvina had a significant psychological toll on the informal entrepreneurs as it unset the gains of the land movement and dislodged them from their newly acquired spaces. Perceptions of the entrepreneurs towards the state and elite capitalist classes deservedly changed with the former viewing the latter in bad light . It is also arguable that the informal entrepreneurs even doubted the sincerity of the mass mobilisation movement that had led them in acquiring space yet it was caught flat footed by the Operation.

The Return....

Despite the attack on their livelihoods the self-reliant occupants of this sector quickly tried to recover. An urge to resist wanton treatment became bolder among the entrepreneurs leading them to resolve to resist such treatment from the state and the elite formal business. Such a resolve meant a serious reorganisation of the sector which saw them re-establishing their representative organisations. These organisations like Makoni Home Industries Committee are

important in that they are louder and more articulate than individual effort at reestablishment and subsequent repossession of space.

Having re-established, Makoni Home Industries Committee engaged the local authority and successfully pushed for the reoccupation of their former stands which the local authority accepted albeit with strict demands for entrepreneurs to conform with local authority regulations. Such rigid demands by the local authority for the entrepreneurs to re-formalise and regularise their operations no doubt sets the precedent for continued contest owing to the fact that the entrepreneurs had almost attained the level expected of them by the local authority prior to the Operation and are now being asked to re-establish which is costly.

The struggle over meaning of space between the local authority and the informal entrepreneurs has escalated in the aftermath of Operation Murambatsvina. Much as the entrepreneurs are willing to re-establish they still question the rationale behind adherence to the local authority's by-laws and building standards which are too lofty for the informal entrepreneurs intending to re-establish. However relations between the local authority and the informal entrepreneurs have thawed and the entrepreneurs are regaining confidence in them. The collaboration between the two in refurbishing facilities at the Makoni Home Industries and the consultative meetings taking place are testimony of how better relations are getting after Operation Murambatsvina. Consultation, even on minor issues serves as the tonic for dissipating conflict as well as facilitating interventions genuinely informed by user needs leading to users having a sense of ownership of the area (Skinner 2006).

The above point draws one to analyse the nature of leadership both in the local authority and the informal economy because without resolute leadership the prospect of forging ahead is diminished. The Makoni Home Industries Committee's re-emergence under a new leadership may be responsible for the reestablishment and success of the home industries in negotiating for space. Skinner (2010) contends that organisation among African informal entrepreneurs though usually absent is very vital as it helps to direct operations of the entrepreneurs. However this is not to say that all is well with the informal entrepreneur leadership. Accusations of mismanagement and misappropriation of ordinary members' stands are not mere talk but really

signify lack of proper organisational and leadership skills among the entrepreneurs. Because informal entrepreneurs are not keen on formalising their ventures it also suffices that the nature of leadership is not very strong and further weakened by internal divisions which dissipate the strength of the urban land movement aimed at making space available to the poor.

Scarcity of Space and Survival Strategies of Informal Entrepreneurs

With respect to scarcity and the resultant contestation for space the informal entrepreneurs and the local authority designed strategies of responding to the social experience of contestation for space. Owing to the uncertainty brought about by the scarcity of space actors on both fronts were seen to devise ways of ‘beating the system’ in order to guarantee their access to space. Even the local authority on realising that it was losing its grip on the control of scarce urban space, came up with strategies meant at retaining control of the said space. It goes without mentioning that the many entrepreneurs also crafted survivalist schemes to ensure that they retain their space or access new ones in line with their requirements. Informal entrepreneurs have had to devise their own means of surviving in the face of incessant scarcity of space magnified by Operation Murambatsvina and continuous purging by the state agents, the local authority and a clique of garrulous land barons. Where the state through the local authority provided a helping hand, the assistance was at best cosmetic. When the entrepreneurs occupied the stands in 1995 the whole area was not serviced and they had to find ways of servicing the area in line with local authority requirements yet this task was supposed to have been carried out by the same local authority. Suffice it to say, the route to owning a stand for informal entrepreneurs is solitary, long, bumpy and winding resulting in some giving up along the way, as is exemplified by the withdrawal of most female entrepreneurs due to lack of affordable space and supposed neglect of informal businesses by the state. The informal entrepreneurs now utilise pragmatic more than normative methods in obtaining and accessing spaces of operation owing to a lopsided land delivery system currently obtaining in urban areas and the use of such pragmatic strategies heightens the prospect of continued contest for urban space at Makoni.

Streamlining of business activities in line with available spaces was also heavily utilised by most informal entrepreneurs is a very effective yet costly option for the informal entrepreneurs in that

it only allows their ventures to remain afloat yet it does not stimulate long term growth. Had adequate space been made available there would not be problems of streamlining which is inimical to informal economy growth

Facing the Future: Life after Operation Murambatsvina

The future of the informal sector can be noted to be in limbo given that the contestation for spaces currently obtaining at Makoni can make or break the survival of this sector. Due to unavailability of space there is likelihood that most informal ventures will remain stagnant in terms of production expansion or even go down under. The view expressed by most respondents was one of despondency and uncertainty to the extent that informal sector sustainability appeared forestalled by the incessant scarcity of space. The situation may turn out otherwise especially for Home Industries stand holders if the local authority's sudden change of heart is anything to go by. Security of tenure ultimately determines the future of informal sector stability and growth in that where security of tenure at available spaces exists there is guarantee of growth. In reviewing the performances of their businesses the entrepreneurs at MHI intimated that if they had not had their businesses disrupted by Operation Murambatsvina they could have grown significantly.

Sadomba (2009) decried the state's deliberate neglect of the informal sector yet it possesses the potential to turn around the country's economic fortunes for the better. The informal entrepreneurs look to the future and want permanency for their ventures. However considering that the state has deliberately stifled and stood in the way of the sector's attempt at permanency under the presumption that informal entrepreneurship is temporary. Such repulsion as exhibited by the state is setting ground for an even more acute contest between the state and the informal entrepreneurs in the future with the latter routing for their realisation and acknowledgement just as is the case with the formal business.

Other informal entrepreneurs especially those specialising in shop front or pavement vending appeared not to have had long term plans for their business ventures which may imply that the vending business was at best a stop-gap measure meant to see them through the prevailing economic dry spell. From yet another perspective it can be said that these entrepreneurs have lost

all hope of securing space owing to the lopsided nature of the space allocating system which does not recognise them. However if we are to factor in the times spent in the vending business by the likes of Musika who has been in it for close to a decade we may conclude that their inability to make long term plans for their businesses is not so much a result of lack of vision but is as a result of the inflexibility of allocating systems which has denied them permanent space hence their loss of confidence in both the local authority and the sustainability of their businesses.

It can also be predicted that the contestation for space will intensify in the future given that there has been a steady increase in the number of people venturing into the informal sector yet allocation or availability of space has lagged behind with little or no space being set aside for informal sector expansion as well as the reversal of the gains of the War Veterans led land movement by Operation Murambatsvina. The new entrants into the informal sector will have to compete with those already there but short on space, thereby sharpening the prospect of heated contests for space. It is also probable that this contest will assume a gender and generational dimension given that more males have joined the economy once dominated by women and that the formal economy is failing to absorb most young school leavers and college graduates who end up joining the informal economy. Also considering that the local authority does not have feasible contingent plans of salvaging the situation, the likelihood of more bruising contests cannot be ruled out.

CONCLUSION

This research has attempted to explore the contest for space in urban settings and to determine its origins, contestants, underlying causes and consequent militation against the wave of bottom-up industrialisation through the informal economy which has overtaken the formal sector in terms of job provision as well as production output. Meaningful development of the informal economy and bottom up industrialisation in Zimbabwe is hinged on recognition of and provision of adequate space to the informal economy. Owing to restrictive policy and legal frameworks and hostile formal, central and local government perceptions towards the informal economy has been left out of government and local authority priority areas especially allocation of space. The

enactment of policies and legislation that have a direct bearing on the informal economy without consulting them or informing them of the implications of these policies leads to conflicts as the informal entrepreneurs end up feeling neglected and unappreciated. Moreover the contest for space has also divided players and even the informal entrepreneurs themselves which is a serious undoing of the mounting wave of bottom-up industrialisation. The survival strategies employed by informal entrepreneurs in the face of scarcity of space are not always beneficial and end up retarding growth of business ventures. Furthermore the scarcity of space and the ensuing contest take on a gender and generational dimension with women and the young bearing the brunt of this scarcity. Overall, the contest for space is far from over considering that more people are joining the sector but the space distribution systems remain lopsided and ignorant of the ever expanding informal economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that central and local government support for the informal sector especially in the procurement of working spaces should be prioritised. There is also need for a thorough revision of the legal instruments governing urban planning and economic development to make them informal economy-friendly. The policy frameworks should be fully supported and carried to the end to ensure that such policy pronouncements bear fruit. The current piecemeal nature of the policies does nothing but cause confusion in the informal economic growth initiative. Following forgetful scotched earth and heavy handed central government interventions in the informal economy like Operation Murambatsvina and Chikorokoza Chapera there is serious need to reinitiate dialogue between state and citizen in order to reincarnate entrepreneur confidence in state-led initiatives. It is of paramount importance that the informal entrepreneurs be provided with permanent space which therefore serves as a tonic for informal economy growth and minimization of illicit underhand dealings which are being necessitated by non-provision of space. Women and youths also need to be given equal consideration in accessing space to ensure that the scarcity of space does not take a gender and generational dimension like it does currently. There is also need for a paradigm shift where current perceptions towards urban space in view of informal sector expansion and the resultant contest for space are changed. There is also need for further research on the resurgence of the informal sector especially in view of the

recent wave of reoccupation of Operation Murambatsvina destroyed stands like is the case at Makoni.

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